



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 14 March 2019

GRASS SKIRT PROJECT INAUGURAL OIL SEARCH HEVEA CUP CARNIVAL & WELLNESS EXPO SUCCESS!

Grass Skirt Project, a not for profit organisation focused on preventing domestic and sexual violence through the vehicle of sport, is proud to announce the successful completion of the inaugural Oil Search Hevea Cup Carnival & Wellness Expo which took place over two days on International Women's Day - March 8th- 9th, 2019 at Oil Search National Football Stadium.

"Oil Search Hevea Cup is here to stay in Papua New Guinea and with 4000 people walking into NFS to check out PNG's first sport and health wellness expo. We are so pleased to have delivered a successful event." said Tahina Booth, Athlete and Founder of the Grass Skirt Project. "The International Women's Day is also the perfect day to launch this amazing Carnival because we, as an organisation, celebrate women and are all about promoting gender equality and highlighting the issues surrounding domestic and sexual violence".

The event, consisting of a Rugby League 9's Tournament and a Wellness Expo fair saw 12 men's and 12 women's teams contesting the carnival cup in their respective divisions while 20 NGOs exhibited at the fair, engaging attendees with important health messages, free health screening, prizes and giveaways. A kids section with free activities, including jumping castles, provided entertainment for the whole family.

Lynne Shori, the founder of Wantaim PNG -a non-profit that educates about sanitation, hygiene and women's economic empowerment travelled with her team from Manus Island to attend the event and had this to say, *"Both of our programmes at Wantaim -a community-led composting toilet system and "Hamamas Meri" are relevant to the 85 percent of Papua New Guinea's population who live in rural areas. Exhibiting at the Wellness Expo gave us a forum to fly our flag in front of a larger urban audience and connect with potential donors, corporate sponsors and other NGOs. We picked up national TV and radio coverage and received invitations from two other groups interested in promoting our story. We also picked up a couple of promising partnership leads which we are now working through. The overwhelming response Wantaim received over the two days at the Hevea Cup has given our team members a heightened sense of the relevance of our work to all of PNG. This, in turn, has brought new energy and drive to the team that is invaluable."*

The fast-paced 9's Rugby League carnival delivered some exciting football as the women's division was taken out by the NCDC Dragons who defeated the Paga Panthers 14 - 12. The men's division saw the competition favourites, the Taurama Magpies, defeat the men's Paga Panthers team 18 -10. Grand final MVP's were Lisa Dau (women) and Ross Ravu (men).

High profile athletes in attendance were the SP Hunters as well as PNG Orchids Captain Carol Hemue and PNG Palais Captain Debbie Karoe who both fielded teams in the Rugby League

Carnival. Grass Skirt Project Ambassador, PNG Orchids and Brisbane Broncos player Amelia Kuk also attended the two-day event and announced the Brian Bell running races, a real crowd pleaser for Under 7s, U10s, U17s and open mothers and fathers races. Winners received gift vouchers from Brian Bell.

10 Hevea Passport major prizes winners were announced before the finals matches and shared in over K30,000 worth of goods and vouchers including a 60 inch TV and K3000 to spend at the Brian Bell Home Centres.

Amelia Kuk, who is also a registered nurse, shared her thoughts, *“The Oil Search Hevea Cup Carnival really showcased the talent of PNG men and women at a grassroots level. It has set up a valuable pathway for aspiring athletes and given everyone an opportunity to play the game we all love. Tahina Booth, David Westley and their team have been doing outstanding work behind the scenes in the lead up to the competition and all throughout the weekend to deliver this landmark event. Everyone who walked through the gates received a passport which really expanded their mindsets as they visited each NGO to hear important messages around health, education and awareness of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Using rugby league to spread the message has been a powerful tool throughout the community and I was very privileged to be a part of such an amazing team and witness the first ever Hevea Cup, a tournament that shows great promise. I believe the best of Grass Skirt Project and the Hevea Cup is yet to come.”*

Grass Skirt project would like to acknowledge the assistance of John Ambane from SP POM RFL for commentating the Rugby League matches while SpiderTek PNG kept the crowd entertained with local and popular music and captured the essence of Oil Search Hevea Cup with their team of photographers and videographers.

Participating NGOs of the 2019 Oil Search Hevea Cup Wellness Expo were: *Oil Search Foundation, Bel isi, Marie Stopes, Femili PNG, WeCare, ChildFund, Wantaim PNG, Sustainable Coastlines, PNG Olympic Committee, PNG Tribal Foundation, Papua New Guinea Sports Foundation, Korobosea Medical Clinic, The Voice Inc., PNG Business Coalition For Women, Equal Playing Field, St John Ambulance, PNG High Performance Sport.*

Thank you to Managing Director Peter Botten of Oil Search for supporting as Principal sponsor. Special thanks to Stephanie Copus Campbell of Oil Search Foundation. *Gold Sponsors: KK Kingston, EM TV, BMobile, New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, David Westley Sports Management, Steamships, Brisbane Broncos, North Queensland Cowboys. Silver Sponsors: Brian Bell Group, Gateway Hotel and Apartments (Coral Sea Hotels). Bronze Sponsors: Pentagon Freight, Pathway Homes, Hastings Deering, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Chiyoda Oceania, Pacific Helicopters. Team Sponsors: Prima Smallgoods PNG, Arran Energy, Pacific Prolog Logistics, Funeral Home, NiuPower, Minespec Parts, Horizon Oil & Gas. In-Kind Support Sponsorship: SP Brewery, Spidertek PNG, Grafitti Signs PNG, Moore Printing, LCR Group.*

For all media enquiries, please contact Tahina Booth, tahina@grassskirtproject.org.

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